

To the Editor:

We thank you for your support, in your editorial of September 19th, for the "stringent enforcement of the alternate landing approach at Newark Airport" as a solution to the problem of airplane noise over the Ironbound section of Newark.

However, a few things need clarification. At NO time did our balloon demonstration pose any potential safety hazard. We received permission from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to release 200 small balloons - "we would have no objection to the toy balloon release." As prearranged with the FAA, Teterboro Flight Service Station was contacted before the balloon release and they rerouted incoming plane flights to over the Pulaski Skyway. When the large balloon was accidentally released, no plane was within miles. Yet, the officials at the airport are making a big thing of it. Is this so they can make people think we are crazies who don't care if a plane crashes? We are the last ones to want to endanger aircraft safety over our homes.

It is precisely because of our concern with safety and health that we want aircraft rerouted. Studies done in Los Angeles, London, and Tokyo have shown noise-induced stress can lead to problems from high blood pressure to alcoholism. Other studies have shown airplane noise to cause birth defects, low birth weight, and learning disability. An informal study done in one of the elementary schools in Ironbound showed a loss of 5 hours per week of classroom time. Multiplied by hundreds of children, the loss of educational time is clearly intolerable. The Department of Transportation ranked Newark Airport fourth worst in the nation according to the number of people affected by noise, and the Airport is still growing.

Does anybody really think we would carry on balloon protests and other such actions if we were able to stop the flights over our homes by trusting the officials' word that the planes will be rerouted? From the evidence of past broken promises, we can see that it's more effective to take matters into our own hands. When we first met with officials in January, 1978, they said they were sympathetic to our problem and were studying solutions. Two and one-half years and many meetings later they're still "sympathetic" and "still studying." Well, they haven't done their homework, because other airports have come up with ways to deal with this problem. In the Washington, D.C. airport, there is a curfew after which planes cannot land. In other airports, certain types of planes aren't allowed to land at all. And the Newark Airport's own alternative landing approach would work, if it were enforced.

Instead of negotiating in good faith, Alan Sagner, Director of the Port Authority, threatens us with court injunctions against our legal protests. He and the other officials choose to harass us, and make us appear to be threatening air safety, rather than meet their obligation to our safety and health. The Port Authority, which pays the City of Newark only a million dollars in lieu of taxes, less than two-tenths of one per cent of the value of its property, while our services are being cut for lack of money, is telling us that it will call the law on us if we don't behave and do as it says.

We cannot wait for the airport noise to be resolved at the federal level. We saw how the powerful airline lobbies were able to delay implementation of the "quiet fleet noise rule of 1976" from a start up date of 1981 to 1988. Obviously their money talks.

We won't be quiet while these large corporations are blasting at our lives. We won't shut up and go away. As long as the FAA, Port Authority and the airlines ignore the sensible solutions to the problem, we will be forced to continue our protests. If Port Authority would spend some of the money we pay for tolls to put up a new electronic guidance system over the skyway for planes, if the airlines would spend some of the money we spend for airfares on quieter aircraft, then we could save the money it's costing us to fix our cracking foundations, pay our doctors and lose our education. We will continue our protests until there is "quiet over Ironbound." We will not spend another 2½ years listening to hot air from airport officials.

The Airplane Committee

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WHO is endangering health
and safety?**